

<sup>a</sup>  
J. B. Allen

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REV. SAMUEL C. JACKSON'S

ELECTION SERMON.

1843.

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*Religious Principle—A Source of Public Prosperity.*

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A

S E R M O N

DELIVERED BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY JOHN DAVIS,

GOVERNOR,

HIS HONOR GEORGE HULL,

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,

THE HONORABLE COUNCIL,

AND

THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

AT

THE ANNUAL ELECTION,

ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 1843.

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BY SAMUEL C. JACKSON,

Pastor of the West Church, Andover.

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**Boston:**

DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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SENATE, JANUARY 11, 1843.

ORDERED, That MESSRS. DICKINSON, ELIOT and GREENWOOD, be a Committee to present the thanks of the Senate to the Rev. SAMUEL C. JACKSON, for his Discourse delivered before the Government of the Commonwealth on the 7th inst., and to request a copy for publication.

Attest :

LEWIS JOSSELYN, CLERK.



☞ The following Discourse was abbreviated in the delivery.

## SERMON.

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2 Peter, ii : 17.

FEAR GOD. HONOR THE KING.

THE usage which has assembled us is a memorial of Christian piety. Good men have gone before us. Their impress is upon our religious customs, upon our laws and institutions. This occasion, consecrated by similar convocations, for more than two centuries, reminds us of the Christian rulers who, for so many generations, have come up hither;—who came in times often of thrilling interest, from changes of administration and dynasty in the mother-land, from the revocation of charters, from the tyranny of foreign governors, and from the scenes and hazards of revolution. What men were they! With what integrity of purpose and nobleness of spirit did they come to this metropolis, to share the honors and responsibilities of government! Would that their successors, in our halls of legislation, would wrap themselves in the mantles that fell from them, and catch from their memories inspirations of virtue and patriotism!

Religion has conferred upon us our free government. From the service it has rendered freedom, as well as from its divinity, it is entitled to be heard by those intrusted with our civil authority.

The brief injunctions I have quoted from an inspired Apostle bring to view our relations both to God and to civil government. The first, implying a supreme regard to the divine will, as the rule and motive of duty, asserts the great law of moral conduct. The other enjoins a due respect to the existing depositary of the civil power, as a public agent, holding a trust from the Almighty for the good of men. Though apparently independent, we are taught, if not by their connexion, yet by the directions of the New Testament, to regard our duties to civil society as a part of our duty to God. Religion, both natural and revealed, teaches that magistrates are "God's ministers;" if so, our obligation to them is founded on a higher obligation to Him who appointed them.

As rulers and people we are not backward to heed suggestions of physical advantage, or the common lessons of political wisdom; but, at the present time, we most need the operation of a surer element of national happiness—the general honesty and high moral principle which result from the fear of God. Permit me to direct your attention to—

RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE AS A SOURCE OF PUBLIC PROSPERITY.



The proprieties of the occasion will not allow me, nor am I disposed to enter the field of party politics, or to touch any party chord ; yet it should be considered that many political questions have moral bearings, that political evils often arise from moral causes, and are illustrations of the moral condition of a people. On these moral aspects I may touch, as appropriate to my office and to this service.

Reverence for God is the summary of all religious principle. That it is an essential element of national prosperity, appears from its relation to true virtue ; from its tendency to secure an observance of the first principles of civil government ; from the insufficiency of other grounds of reliance ; and from its efficacy to diminish, if not remove, prominent public evils.

I. Religious principle is the main support and security of true virtue.

That individual virtue is the grand basis of republican freedom, is a truth that no intelligent man will for one moment doubt. There can be but two kinds of government, the one relying for its support on force, the other on moral restraints. That the prevalence and efficacy of moral restraints depend mainly on a general and devout reference to the supreme will, as the rule of duty and the incentive to its performance, is certain. Instead of abstract reasoning,

I prefer to appeal to the undeniable facts, that the Christian revelation enforces duty upon the principle of a command from the Creator,—that our own moral powers acquiesce,—that the experience of the world has proved that the light of conscience, and natural religion, have never yet produced an amount of virtue sufficient to constitute a safe basis of popular freedom,—and that the highest instances of moral and social advancement have been in those communities most governed by the precepts and sanctions of the Christian religion. Forever true are those memorable words of Washington, so often quoted, and worthy of being repeated in the hearing of the nation through all time :—“ Let us,” he says, “ with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”

But there is a morality of practical atheism. It would be modified, neither in principle nor extent, if the idea of God were obliterated from the world. It honors religion with compliments, but discards its principles in practice. It overrules the laws of Christianity by its decisions, and substitutes the laws of honor and public opinion, of interest and reputa-

tion, or a sense of fitness and propriety. When Alexander Hamilton had fallen ingloriously, he affirmed that he knew duelling was contrary to the law of God, and that his usefulness required him to violate that law!—thus pronouncing no law of Heaven so rigid as not to yield to human wisdom!—presuming, from considerations of supposed utility, to set aside an acknowledged statute of the Almighty, as if the will and wisdom of Omniscience were not the highest expediency! And is not this a sample of the morality too common even among those of virtuous repute and eminent station? Their virtues, however they may adorn character and benefit society, are too often dissociated from religious principle, from a love of rectitude, as the will of a rewarding and avenging Deity. Based on inferior principles, such virtues too often fail, when cupidity and ambition present their temptations, and crime flatters with the hope of impunity. They need higher moral securities. Hence those delinquencies in reputedly virtuous men, which sometimes astonish the community—their peculations and embezzlements in public offices, and their stupendous risks and misappropriations of intrusted capital. Hence the immoralities which invade our sanctuaries of justice in connexion with legal practice; which dishonor our halls of legislation in the various forms of artifice;

which pollute the arena of politics, and taint the whole atmosphere of party strife. Hence the establishment of dangerous precedents, and the sacrifice of principle, to purchase the political support of sects, and even of the grossest forms of fanaticism and delusion. Hence, too, the relinquishment of political consistency for preferment, and the political somersets and treacheries which confound the expectations of parties and of the nation.

To loose principles of morality is to be referred the infamous doctrine of repudiation. Wicked and base as it is, it finds advocates, when to vindicate it is the way to popular favor, or for personal advantage. And when condemned, it may be too often rather from national pride, and from a regard to national credit and policy, than because it is a sin against men and against God; rather because the finger of scorn is pointed at us on the exchanges of Europe, than because it is a monstrous violation of obligation in the offenders, and atrocious injustice to the sufferers. It is, indeed, humiliating that our country, containing more virtue and christian principle, having more property distributed among the laboring classes than any other nation on earth, and having boundless resources of national wealth, should nevertheless, in the markets of the old world, amid a surplus of capital, be denied the means of provid-



ing daily bread for her famishing government ; and, in public faith, be put below the petty and despotic sovereignties of Europe, or even the Egyptian tyrant. But it is not the dark page this abomination will make in our history, which is most to be regretted. It is its moral turpitude. It is the evidence it furnishes of a want of integrity and conscience. It is its demoralizing influence upon the nation, leading to a light estimate of the rights of creditors, of the solemnity of contracts, and ultimately to the destruction of public and private confidence.

But how does this moral atrocity differ in principle, from that more private repudiation sometimes witnessed in the abuse of bankrupt laws and statutes of limitation,—when the former is regarded as any other than a temporary expedient for the mutual benefit of both debtor and creditor ; and when a legal discharge, by either, is regarded as a release from moral responsibility ;—as if a legal provision could exonerate men from obligations with which their Creator binds them. What is this but to make human law the standard of moral duty, and immutable justice a creature of legislation and of accident !

Verily, as a community, we need a higher principle of virtue—the purity and efficacy of that which partakes of Omniscience and of divine authority. This controls man on the whole line of his duty. It

reaches to every action of public and private life which has the attribute of right. He who, under the influence of religious principle, will surrender his life, if the price of his integrity and of the favor of God, can oppose an impenetrable shield to the power of temptation. It is virtue of this stamp, in rulers and people, which our country now needs, as the infallible remedy of its disorders, and the grand specific of its welfare. Never can we reach the highest measure of prosperity till the fear of God shall penetrate every heart, and pervade the nation.

II. Religious principle tends to secure an observance of the first principles of our civil government.

What are some of the principles which lie at the basis of free, civil institutions? The universal propensities and necessities of human nature are the decision of the Almighty, that man shall live in civil society; for God is the Author of Nature, and her voice is but the utterance of his own. If civil society is a divine appointment, we are under obligation to Him who instituted it, as well as to its members, to regard his will respecting it, and to form and continue it in harmony with his designs. If he has willed its existence; he has, of course, willed whatever is essential to its preservation;—that individuals shall surrender certain rights to society, and that society shall in return protect their rights, and punish their

violation. But as the members of society cannot act in the mass, to legislate and decree justice, there arises the necessity of government as the agent of society to effect its objects. Government is the power of society, concentrated in the hands of delegates, to secure the great ends for which society exists. It must be in accordance with the will of God, because, having ordained civil society, he must have ordained the necessary agencies for effecting its true ends. For the same reason, he has ordained the different branches of government, legislative, judicial and executive; the enactment and execution of just laws; and the intellectual and moral education of the people. As then, the various officers of government, in the exercise of their authority, are administering God's institution, and can have no right to make it subserve any purposes inconsistent with his designs, they are manifestly bound, as civil agents, by his will. They are to use their power for the purposes for which it was conferred, and for which society exists, or they contravene the laws of their Creator. Every member of a Commonwealth, also, is bound to select men as the organs of government, who will administer it according to the divine intention; and is, himself, to regard every law essential to the social and civil welfare as the solemn enactment of the Infinite Lawgiver. And, in case of unjust

enactments, rather than employ an *unavailing* and destructive resistance, by force, he is to obey God and conscience, and abide the consequences, though they be the severest inflictions of the civil power.

These principles will commend themselves as the elements of our civil institutions. They are unquestioned truths in Moral Philosophy. If true at all, they are elementary truths in the science of government. These principles admitted, it is easy to discover how the fear of God, swaying intelligent minds, must secure an observance of them, and thus remove a great proportion of our public evils.

He who has a conscientious regard to the divine will, and has intelligence to discover it, will respect it in his political relations, and aim to give effect to the divine intentions. This would secure the proper ends of government, and an escape from its chief abuses. His religious principle will not allow him to make a divine ordinance a mere instrument of ambition, and to act on the maxim that "this world was made for Cæsar." Nor will he be indifferent to those moral restraints which induce a regard to individual rights, and an observance of promises and oaths; for these moral restraints, with him, derive their authority from the Infinite Will, which is his supreme law. Aware that all agents of government have, in their civil powers, a trust from God as well



as from men, and are bound to accomplish the divine purpose in committing it to them, which is, not the attainment of local, or personal, or party interests, but the good of the whole society, he will not deem it a light matter to assume office, or to elect to it incompetent and unprincipled men. Admitting, too, the divine authority of civil enactments which are essential to the well-being of society, and regarding every resistance or usurpation of the civil power as tending to the dissolution of society, he reverences the sanctity of the laws. To him they rest on the authority of the Creator. To him legislators are agents of the King of kings. By him, laws essential to the general welfare are regarded as founded, not merely on the will of a majority, but on the eternal will, and they bind his conscience. And when called to obey what he deems an unrighteous law, instead of involving himself and society in the evils of extrajudicial violence, he does what he believes to be his duty, and suffers government to take its course, trusting in the power of right and of God.

In a community governed by rulers and constituted of citizens, of such a character, the great political disorders which now afflict us could never exist. Only those would long remain, which result from honest ignorance, which are the least in our catalogue of evils. This is the certain tendency of reli-

gious principle. If generally diffused and operative, it must infallibly secure general respect to the great truths on which our government is founded, and be the efficient means of general prosperity.

The value of religious principle as an element of national happiness appears,

III. From the insufficiency of other and the usual grounds of reliance.

It has been a common error to rely greatly, if not chiefly on physical, rather than on moral causes of prosperity. Those concerned in the management of states, have made it a primary object to increase physical advantages—to give activity and force to causes which augment population, industry, wealth and military strength, and to encourage those arts which multiply the outward comforts and improvements of society. Hence, their inquiries have been mainly directed to theories of political, financial and military administration—to commerce, capital, labor, manufactures, the laws and balance of trade, conditions of price, the standard of value, banking, revenue, expenditure, taxation, and to kindred topics of Political Economy. Upon these topics have been concentrated almost the entire wisdom of politicians and statesmen, and a vast proportion of the legislation of Christendom.

No friend of his country, or of his species, could

wish the principles of the modern science of Political Economy to receive less attention ; it is rather his regret that they are so little understood and so often violated by ignorant and selfish agents in public affairs. Yet if history stamps any political course with folly, it is an exclusive or a main dependence on physical resources. Nations distinguished by a propitious climate, productive soil, gainful industry, lucrative commerce, dense population, military strength, and similar elements of prosperity, have found them all a bulwark of sand against a rush of evils which these physical agents could neither mitigate nor control. The track of time is filled with the wrecks of nations and governments that have rested on such securities. Human passion is the great leveller of states. This is not subdued, but often rendered more intense and ungovernable by external advantages. No modern nation has been more conspicuous as an example of such reliances, to the exclusion of moral means, than France. Her great passion has been for physical improvements. Her artists have multiplied inventions ; her philosophers have applied their science to practical purposes ; her statesmen have studied the lessons of Political Economy ; her generals and government have kept alive a thirst for military glory, and stored the country with the apparatus of war. Indeed, overlooking in a great

degree, moral and religious influences, almost her entire wisdom and policy have been exerted to secure physical results. The effect of this upon her social and political welfare, is sufficiently indicated by the fact, that her primary assemblies, embracing her educated citizens and electors, have sanctioned by their votes ten different constitutions, from the democratic charter of the Revolution to the despotism of Napoleon. Her subsequent revolutions and changes of dynasty, her conspiracies and attempted regicides, her unquiet and revolutionary tendencies, to say nothing of the abject condition of the millions of her peasantry, are a practical comment upon the impolicy of trusting to outward improvements for national happiness.

Those approach nearer to wisdom who, overlooking religious influences, embrace other moral means ; as a popular form of government with just restrictions on the power of the ruler and the license of the individual, the enactment and administration of salutary laws, the cultivation of the arts and of literature and science, a refinement of manners, and, above all, the diffusion of knowledge by universal education.

Unquestionably those laws which secure to the mass of our population the immediate proprietorship of lands, are an immense moral benefit. They tend



to create a virtuous sense of independence, and to impart moral dignity. Only one year after the Leyden Pilgrims rested the ark of God upon our shores, one of them wrote to his "loving cousin" in England, "wee are all free-holders, the rent-day doth not trouble us." He had begun to feel the inspiring power of freedom—his value and his rights as a man and a member of society. And all civil regulations which have this effect on the mass, are of unspeakable worth. Vattel, though comparatively a modern writer, speaks of it with admiration, that in England "mere citizens are seen to form considerable enterprizes, in order to promote the glory and welfare of the nation." Certain it is, that when "mere citizens," or associated citizens, are encouraged to do this by the operation of their laws, "the glory and welfare of the nation" are comparatively secure.

But the chief ground of reliance, aside from religion, is the general education of the people. Few, indeed, would expressly exclude religious culture, yet by some it is so feebly urged, that it can enter but slightly into their calculations of the agencies essential to the highest prosperity.

Some, it may be, instead of relying on universal education, go to the opposite extreme, and sympathize somewhat with Sir Wm. Berkley, a colonial governor of Virginia, who, in an official communica-

tion to the lords of the committee of the colonies, says, "I thank God there are no free schools, nor printing, and I hope we shall not have them these hundred years. For learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them and libels against the government. God keep us from both." How different his views from those of the pious founders of New England! How different the results! To our Christian fathers is the world indebted for the first attempt ever made, to carry into effect the idea of the general diffusion of secular knowledge among all classes. Such a conception seems never to have entered into the contemplations of one of the ancient philosophers and statesmen. The Puritan colonists unquestionably derived this idea from Christianity, which, early in its history, made provision, by means of parishes and churches, ministers and schools, for universal instruction in its principles. That any among us should be afraid of a general and thorough education of the whole people, even without moral and religious instruction, is most strange. Yet there are good men who affirm mere learning, separated from moral principle, to be worse than ignorance, and a public calamity. It is not so. Better that the nation, whatever its moral character, be filled with knowledge and science, than with bru-

tal ignorance and its usual concomitant, a dark and blind superstition. Surely experience does not teach us that secular instruction alone, will increase either the ability, or the disposition of the masses of society to destroy its institutions. The most terrific scenes of the most fearful revolutionary convulsions of modern times, were enacted by the ignorant rabble, whom their educated leaders would have restrained, and whose excesses they deplored. Witness the Parisian mobs in the days of Mirabeau and Danton. If we consult the records of civil wars, for instance, in Ireland and Spain, where the most ignorant population in civilized countries have been excited to insubordination, we shall find this very class, under daring and artful leaders, the most terrible scourges of a nation. Their ignorance did not prevent their secret plots, nor lessen their tendency to unlawful combination, nor daunt their mad courage, while it increased their wild fanaticism, the fury of their zeal, and their savage ferocity.

Ignorance in the mass is their strength. It excludes that jealousy of pre-eminence and difference of judgment which accompany intelligence. An ignorant multitude all bend one way before a gust of passion, or the command of a dictator, like a forest in a tempest. They move in one flood of desolation. Their ignorance consolidates, infuriates,

and blinds them, and renders them the most formidable of all destroyers. But education breaks up this adhesive mass, by introducing rival interests, discordance of views, independence of thought, and thus destroys their unity in mischief, which is the secret of their power, and the element most to be dreaded.

The most uncultivated, also, are able, and are the most ready, to learn the lessons of disaffection and levelling taught by demagogues and revolutionary reformers. Destructionism is a science which does not require an ability to read and write to understand it. Its dogmas are short and simple. "Down with the rich—abolish hereditary property—away with chartered rights—the many are slaves to the few—agitate and overturn till the fortunes of men are equal." This was Jacobinism in Europe a half century ago ; it is Chartism in England, and Destructionism in the United States now. And this is a political faith which the man who cannot read and write can comprehend as perfectly as other men ; and, without learning, he may be an efficient propagator of such doctrines among those of his own stamp.

While it is unquestionable that the well-informed will be more orderly, humane and virtuous, than those classes which have been destitute of all in-



struction, it is equally certain that mere intellectual cultivation is inadequate to the maintenance of our moral and political well-being. Human wisdom is not human virtue. There may be virtuous ignorance and unprincipled intelligence.

Talents angel-bright,  
If wanting worth, are shining instruments  
In false ambition's hands, to finish faults  
Illustrious, and give infamy renown.

That may tend to a result which of itself will not attain it. The favorable tendencies of intellectual culture will inevitably be so overborne by the opposing tendencies of society, that these alone will never secure the grand end of perpetuating our institutions. Agencies that are too feeble may let us down to destruction as certainly as no agencies at all. Virtue and religion only can secure a discharge of those moral obligations which knowledge reveals, and subject the moral feelings to the control of an enlightened understanding.

Those who regard mere secular knowledge an infallible remedy for political disorders, should remember that our danger lies not in the ignorance of the people, but in the perverted intelligence of their leaders. It is notorious that the great body of the people are frequently *led*. They do not always merit the benediction of the great dramatic bard—

Blessed are those

Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled,  
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger  
To sound what stop she please.

On most questions of general policy, the majority of the people, though uneducated, if honestly dealt with, would decide rightly ; and the great reason why they decide otherwise, is not so much because they are unlearned, as because they are misled by those who have more intelligence than principle. True, education would be a partial alleviation of this evil, as it would better enable the people to detect a false guidance ; but, without moral principle, it would be only the semblance of a remedy. Experience shows that the intelligent and cultivated are often as deeply enlisted in the success, have as strong sympathy in the movements, and are as truly the slaves and victims of party, as the most ignorant and rude. How then shall intellectual education be sufficient, when our chief political evils already arise from intelligence without virtue ?

Imagine a population like the primitive Christians spread over our mountains and vallies, uneducated, but retaining and exemplifying the principles of the New Testament. Would they, though illiterate, be dangerous citizens, or contribute to the number and power of our social and political vices ? When occa-

sionally misled, Christian principle, inducing an honest watchfulness and care, would speedily restore them to the right path. While, therefore, popular ignorance is a fearful evil, popular corruption is the greater one. Religious principle, and this only, can cure the greater evil, while it mitigates every other.

The importance of religious principle, not merely to our general prosperity, but to the permanence of our free institutions, is manifest,—

IV. From its sure efficacy to diminish, if not remove, prominent public evils.

This is apparent from the views already advanced. For if the prevalence of true virtue is attained; if the essential principles of good government are observed; and if no deceptive reliance is placed on insufficient means, the necessary result must be an alleviation of the evils which impair the public welfare and menace our prospects. But this point deserves a more specific illustration.

One evil which has become sufficiently prominent to awaken deep solicitude, is, *an impatience of just restraints, and a disregard of the supremacy of law.*

It is the perfection of the celebrated system of Rousseau, entitled the Social Contract, that “every person, while united with all, shall obey only himself, and remain as free as before the union.” If by this is meant that the individual is to have no wishes or

passions that are not in harmony with what is right, and in "obeying himself" obeys only such wishes; and consequently that he is as unconscious of restraint, and therefore as free as before his union with society—this is, indeed, the perfection of freedom. But if it means that the individual when united with society, is to obey only himself, however selfish and aggressive, and yet continue as free from restraints and coercion, as in a state of solitude, it is a freedom both outrageous and impracticable. It would reduce man to that state of barbarism from which religion and government have redeemed him. The very idea of government supposes restraint. It has its origin primarily in the vices of society, which it is to restrain for mutual security. But in this country, where LIBERTY is a cherished word on every tongue, there is constant danger of mistaking it for exemption from restraints, or undue license to personal gratifications, even in defiance of public law. This were a liberty to invade rights, and to restrain it is the very end for which government was instituted. Such liberty, instead of affording security, would render every human right insecure. It is the worst conceivable tyranny, and men do actually take refuge from it under any other form of despotism. In the age of feudal oppression, men chose to be the vassals of one feudal lord rather than be op-

pressed by a host of these petty tyrants. When the nobles of Denmark attempted to subject the rest of the nation to an iron sceptre, the people, of their own accord, clothed Frederick III. with absolute power, and tore up their political constitution with their own hands. And their monarch has continued their absolute Head and Lawgiver to the present period. So will it ever be. The beaten path of nations is through insubordination and anarchy to a consolidated despotism. Who would not prefer the dominion of Autocrats and Oligarchs to that of a tumultuous and lawless democracy?

A contempt of law and invasion of the prerogatives of government, is obviously one of our chief dangers. Ebullitions of popular violence have ever been, and ever will be, the incidents of freedom in communities of imperfect morals. But do we not witness an advance of the spirit of insubordination under somewhat new and more fearful developments?—in the high places of our land, even in State Legislatures and in the capitol of the Union? Look at the revolutionary measures, not among an excited populace, but in legislative bodies—not to throw off intolerable grievances, but simply to obtain or defeat political power, by which legislation has been suspended or terminated and State sovereignty prostrated. And who can forget the scenes of personal



outrage and prolonged tumult in the supreme Legislature of the land, in defiance of parliamentary and of civil law, which have covered good men with humiliation and the nation with dishonor! Surely these are no doubtful or common indications of the spirit of turbulence, and that however many may value freedom, it is not that freedom which consists with the supremacy of order and law.

That a petition to dissolve our national Union should proceed from some deluded men, were a small matter. Insane delusions diminish responsibility. That some should conscientiously resist certain constitutional provisions pertaining to the relations of the North to the South, were comparatively of little moment. But when men of high civic distinction obstruct the enforcement of just civil regulations, and even wink at tergiversation and corruption in witnesses and jurors ;—when they are accessory to disorganizing movements in those high chambers from which our laws proceed,—when they sanction the annulment, by an ordinary legislative act, of chartered franchises, and of the conditions of an unexpired compact, and thus unsettle the foundations on which repose the rights of property ;—or when they countenance resistance to legal and constitutional authority, or its unauthorized assumption by individuals and communities—these are a ground for the most

serious apprehensions. It is the disastrous example of the high dignifying turbulence and disorder, accelerating the overthrow of our national habits of deference, submission to control, love of order, and consequently subverting the foundations of law and government. The mischief of such an influence is absolutely inconceivable. Of those who exert it, it is as true, as of the criminal indicted at the bar of justice, that "they have not the fear of God before their eyes." They are counteracting his will, written, as by a visible hand, on every social organization, "the maintenance of government by the observance and execution of its laws."

But, threatening as such evils are acknowledged to be, the diffusion of sound religious influence would terminate them at once and forever. The best security for subordination to human laws, is subjection to the laws of God. In whatever community the Christian religion produces its proper fruits, there can be little occasion for civil restraints, or disposition to violate them. Here there will be love of justice to prevent an invasion of individual rights, benevolent affections to bind man to man in the discharge of reciprocal duties, and habits of self-control, and of submission to restraint. These virtues and habits will commence in Christian families, be matured in Christian schools, and by the various influences of a

Christian community. Thus religion does the precise work which it is the object of government to accomplish. It performs it more effectually than government ever can, for it subdues and eradicates passions which the civil power can only restrain.

Let Christianity pass with its hallowed influences over a people, and when government follows, with its retinue of officers, courts and penalties, it finds itself anticipated—its work already done by a wiser and better hand. It finds no crimes to punish, no occasion to impose restraints. Such a people, under a wisely constituted government, will be unconscious of its restraints and almost of its existence. As, in sacred architecture, the perfection and symmetry of the structure render the beholder unconscious of its vastness and grandeur; so a Christian people under a good government, experiencing its full benefits, are, for this very reason, insensible to its perfection, as the highest achievement of political wisdom.

It is also an evil to which, as a nation, we are peculiarly exposed, *to overlook the paramount importance of morals over politics.*

Moral services are of a higher character than political. They are of more permanent and salutary tendency. The political benefits men are able to confer are often limited and uncertain. Statesmen of equal integrity and wisdom, will propose different

and even opposite schemes of policy. But in morals, as right principles and conduct involve higher consequences, so it is more easy to discover them. Divine Wisdom has shed the strongest light upon what is most important to man. Indeed, it has been accounted the great merit of government, to refrain from doing evil, rather than attempt to confer positive benefits. While it can do little to improve morality and virtue, it may do much to prevent their advancement.

As, in this country, the people are the source of political power and responsible for its exercise ; and as partizans and candidates for office have an interest in pressing political measures upon public notice, and magnifying their importance, there is a constant tendency to attach undue consequence to mere party politics ; and, what is worse, to overlook and even sacrifice moral considerations which are vital to the general welfare. In our devotion to politics, and in our idolatry of republican institutions, we ought to be aware, that after ample security has been obtained for individual rights, as of conscience, property and person, reputation and life, the happiness of a community depends immeasurably more on its moral and intellectual condition, its domestic and social habits, than on the decision of any political questions, or even upon forms of government. Our chief

sources of unhappiness are those social evils which arise, not from the mistakes and incompetence of rulers, but from individual violations of moral obligation. The evils of a despotism may be slight, compared with those which may be diffused and tolerated among a people who are free. In a community, where essential rights are not grossly infringed by the civil power, and where friendship imparts its kindness, and sympathy tenders its ministrations, and honor walks erect in all the intercourse of life, and benevolence performs its kind offices and dispenses its treasures, and religion diffuses its heavenly charities and pure morality—in such a community there must be happiness, however the tide of party politics may turn, and whatever form its government may assume. No mistake can be greater than to imagine that a free government, or a particular administration of it, is a panacea for all evils, and the grand requisite to national happiness. It is indispensable, so far as to afford civil security, and beyond this, it is valuable while directed by justice and truth, and no longer; and the same is true of all governments on earth. The Danes under a legal despotism, and a fortunate succession of kings, have had a higher and more uniform measure of social happiness, than has been found among the vallies of the Alps, under the Helvetic confederacy, which, for



five hundred years, have been governed by free institutions. The South American States, from Mexico to Brazil, have had independence and republican constitutions; but when, since the storm of revolution and anarchy began to beat on those realms, have their population been as intelligent and virtuous, as comfortable and happy, as are, at this moment, the people of despotic Prussia, where there is general order, private virtue, and the most perfect system of universal education on the globe? Compare two countries under the same political constitution, the extremes naturally and morally of the United Kingdom—not compare, but contrast the barren but noble Scotland, with the fertile but miserable Ireland—the improved moral and social condition of the one, with the debasement, tumult and pauperism of the other, and this after six centuries of British dominion. Such facts are not adduced to prove that despotism is preferable to rational freedom, or that a bad government is better than a good one, but to show, as they do incontestibly, that the welfare of a state depends more on the diffusion of intelligence and individual virtue, than on the soundness of its political theories, or the perfection of its civil polity.

If the happiness of a people does not depend mainly on their form of government, much less does

it on the decision of general questions of policy which arise under its administration, which are often temporary and magnified into fictitious importance by the perverted vision of party. Our public domain, a national exchequer, protection and revenue, or the order of succession to the presidential chair—what are these, important as they are, compared with the cherishing of those habits and virtues, which are the basis of all we prize, in the relations and intercourse of social life? Yet how much more deeply do these political subjects arrest the attention and move the feelings of this entire nation; and when introduced into our legislative assemblies, how much more of zeal and eloquence do they call forth, than any questions pertaining to universal education, or to the conservation of the public morals. Is not this an evil? Is it right that such a great proportion of our political zeal, and even of our legislation, should have no respect to the highest interests of the land? Is it right, in legislating on subjects that have a moral bearing, as of bankruptcy, of divorce, and of capital punishments, not to make their moral bearings a paramount consideration? Can it be right to contravene the revealed laws of God, and set an example to the community of contemning his published will? Can it be right for politicians so to manage the business of elections, and the discus-

sion of public measures, and the whole of political warfare, as to depress the standard of public virtue and demoralize society? Such public conduct, by its deteriorating character, and by its corrupting influences, is an evil incomparably greater than any which arise from incompetent legislation, or mere political errors. And this practice of assigning to politics a rank above morals, would find a sure correction in that profound respect to the Almighty, and to his designs, which will lead men to weigh all interests in the balances of rectitude and truth, and to regard primarily the moral and permanent well-being of their species.

It is to be expected also that we shall encounter *the evils arising from visionary and disorganizing schemes of reform.*

Levelling in politics, like fanaticism in religion, is a species of empiricism which will have its devotees. Some may honestly leave the paths of experience and common sense for the regions of political romance. Others, from an ambition to acquire a distinction by disorganizing theories which they never would gain by promoting truth and order, and judging of their importance by the uproar they occasion, proceed to assault the wisdom of ages, and to proclaim doctrines which, if carried out, would desolate society. Practical rules are safe when they have

been tested. It is by following conclusions warranted by facts, and obvious deductions from known principles, that true science has been advanced. It was in this way that the civil fathers who laid the foundations of this Republic were able to acquire and exhibit to the world more of the true nature of government, than could be gathered from all the theories and speculations ever offered to mankind. How absurd then to leave the lessons of experience for the schemes of visionary theorists!—especially for those which have been tried and are rejected by the common sense of civilized society. Surely history has been written, and philosophy has applied it, to little purpose, if the errors of past generations are to be repeated by those that follow.

The world has already witnessed the promulgation of doctrines, and an attempt to reduce them to practice, which were not wholly unlike some now advocated. It was contended that the right of suffrage belonged to the inhabitants of all countries, irrespective of their moral condition, and that to withhold it justified insurrection. Emancipation from religious thraldom — equalization of property — the natural rights of man, were urged to their full extent. The priestly order, that supposed instrument of enslaving the mind, was crushed. The possessions of the rich were sequestered. If hereditary property

was not abolished, it was at the disposal of the mass, and if equality was not realized, it was their fault. And what was the result of this experiment in freedom? Its enormities were the terror of the world. The whole fabric of society was heaved as by an earthquake. Will not one such experiment in the history of our race suffice?

A political theorist speculating in seclusion, and feeling none of the evils which follow from his speculations, may perpetrate mischief on a mighty scale. It is not an adequate justification that his errors are those of a benevolent mind. No man has a right to disregard the teachings of experience and the practical wisdom of his generation—to put on the hardihood necessary to stir up a community, from mere hypothesis, to venture on fundamental changes which must be hazardous and may be destructive. The private individual who wastes his estate on impracticable schemes, however harmless, is pitied. But something more than pity is due to him who, disregarding the monitions of the past, and the guides of the present, devotes exalted powers to mischievous speculations, and trifles with the happiness of a nation—to him who promulgates theoretical doctrines which first tend to excite popular discontent, and then to increase it to a revolutionary phrenzy;—doctrines which engender the elements of discord, and



array the different orders of society in hostility to each other as “natural enemies,” which aim to take down and reconstruct the social edifice, and which, if carried into effect, would put into our hands a cup of trembling.

It is matter of gratitude that such men are as yet so few. It does not follow that their power of evil is to be despised. The most sanguinary scenes recorded in the annals of revolution, are traceable to the agency of a few. And the surest defence against such danger is that sound moral and religious influence which restrains, by giving energy to conscience, and which leads the people to prefer sober views and safe usages, to violent and dangerous reforms. The same influence will prevent political parties from courting the alliance of such helpers; from increasing their power of mischief, and from arresting the descent of their doctrines to oblivion.

No enumeration of public evils would be complete, that did not include those which arise from the *extravagance and profligacy of party principles and party action*.

To declaim against the existence of parties in politics, is as unwise as it is futile. Able and aspiring men will honestly espouse different views on political, as on all other subjects. Wherever there is freedom of opinion and action, they will discuss

their particular doctrines, and endeavor to propagate them. As these doctrines relate to questions in which every citizen has a personal concern, and for the decision of which he has, by the constitution, a personal responsibility, they must often awaken a strong interest. Hence the distinction of parties. They are unavoidable in a free country. To a certain extent they are useful. The perpetual inspection of the eagle eye of party is a powerful check upon thoughtless and injudicious legislation, and may and should contribute to the perfection of measures of policy, and to the strength of the government.

My objection lies, not against parties in themselves considered, but against the spirit and principles by which they are usually governed. Their leaders and active adherents too often appear to fear party more than God, and to love its spoils better than the rewards of honest virtue. They do not sufficiently honor the claims of civil government. They do not perform political duties with a suitable reference to the will of Him who appointed these duties, nor even with a just regard to the common principles of morality. This is the great source of the evils that arise from the existence and action of parties. If their agents were honest, and acted upon the high principles of Christian virtue—if they avowed no sentiments, urged no arguments, adopted

no measures except those which they conscientiously believed to be in accordance with the laws of God and with the true ends of civil society, nearly all the evils of party would at once cease, however discordant its principles and intense its action. Honest differences of opinion, issuing in upright conduct, would be the least of all our public evils, and scarcely a calamity.

Party introduces into politics a dangerous code of morals—false principles and defective motives of conduct. It proposes the most selfish ends and attains them by dishonest means; often sanctioning an utter disregard of the dictates of true patriotism, as well as a violation of the precepts of Christianity. Instead of regarding all political power as a sacred trust from the Almighty, to be exercised only in harmony with his will, and with the highest welfare of the whole country, it accounts this power a fortuitous acquisition, to be wielded for party purposes, especially, to secure its own perpetuity; and in ways however immoral, and on principles however dangerous, which party shall prescribe. It sets aside the law of God, as an authoritative rule and a motive of political conduct, and makes the eternal principles of rectitude bend to views of political advantage. Like an unprincipled despot, it is swayed by preju-

dice and passion, acts without conscience, and legislates without God.

What humiliating proofs of the prostitution of party meet us on every hand! Amidst its selfish contests, the great interests of the country are lost out of view. Momentous questions of policy, affecting the industry, the business, the morals of this entire nation, are made subservient to the one great object of acquiring or retaining party power. Its schemes and operations, at this moment, in our national Legislature, leave little time to devise and perfect measures important to the general welfare, and render it well-nigh impracticable to secure the legislation demanded by the necessities of the people.

It is melancholy to witness the extent to which it is true of nearly all political movements, that the reigning Deity is party, and the inspiring Genius party selfishness. Party furnishes the principle of conduct — sets the example — bestows the reward. The great object, however artfully concealed under professions of regard for “the people,” is party emoluments and triumphs. Even the virtues of life are weighed in its balances. True patriotism is to obey its requisitions; fidelity to the country is the blind adoption of its measures. Its leaders and oracles are wheeled about in its anomalous revolutions, but too generally kept by a strong centrifugal force

equally distant from what ought to be the centre of union—political opinions embraced in Christian integrity—political action in harmony with virtuous principle—all public conduct on right moral grounds.

Is there not needed another revolution in morals like that recently witnessed among society's outcasts, which shall reach men more guilty and dangerous—corrupt and unprincipled partizans? The means of reformation are within our power. They are involved in a corrected public opinion. Let moral men decree a moral revolution in politics. Let them foil the machinations of evil men at those primary assemblies, where they concentrate their cabals to effect a nomination, relying on party machinery to secure an election. Let the people resolve to vote only for men of sound moral worth; to abide by this rule, though it may cost a present triumph, being assured that no party victory can compensate for its violation. Such a purpose of moral and Christian freemen carried out, while they follow their political preferences, however various, will accomplish the end. The suffrages of the great mass of the tried friends of virtue and religion, will be too grave a matter to be disregarded by the agents of party. Let moral men cast aside, even in the greatest political emergency, every candidate whose conduct, in any relation of life, is stained by palpable immorali-



ties, however faithful he may have been to his political faith, or to his country. The virtuous are to demand that their rulers have that honesty which has the guaranty of uniform virtue and sound moral principle, which will lead them to be faithful among the faithless, and preserve them uncontaminated amidst infection ; not that honesty which can be so easily maintained when it runs on the line of interest and promotion—but that which will endure, when tempted by the chances of office in a new combination of parties, or by a place in the line of succession to the cabinet or the throne.

It is manifest that great responsibilities must attach to men of eminence, not merely from holding a public trust, but as private individuals. And no responsibility rests upon them more obvious, or more important, than to augment the prevalence and the efficacy of religious principle. If it is the safeguard of freedom, there can be no higher duty of a patriot than to cherish and extend it.

Scarcely less is their responsibility from the relation of their own private morals to the public virtue. Let them solemnly consider the reflex influence of their example, on the people at large. Thousands of youthful aspirants learn to treat lightly obligations to moral duty, from the bad example of *one* eminent for station and intellect. The brilliancy of his ca-

reer and the splendor of his talents, give force to his example. His very vices have honor and dignity, from their association with his success and his public fame. And it were idle to expect an extensive reformation of principles, or suppression of vices, while rank and station, wealth and power, throw their mighty influence into the opposite scale. Never will sound moral and Christian truth obtain the ascendancy it deserves, till those who mould general opinion and practice, submit to its authority; till the makers and administrators of our laws shall respect the divine law; till the rulers of the people shall be in subjection to God.

The economy of this world is adapted to moral excellence, rather than to intellectual greatness. The human race has more need of the ministrations of virtue, than of the efforts of genius. Had many names now illustrious in the annals of literature and science, never been enrolled on those bright records, how much less the loss to mankind, than if there never had existed men like Solon and Lycurgus, Alfred, John Winthrop, William Penn and Washington! The former have contributed to the honor and pleasure of their species; the latter, simply by their virtues, have added an inconceivable amount to the happiness of the world.

This accommodation of the divine economy is also

seen, in the homage which human nature pays to virtue, rather than to talent. It was a maxim of the ancients, that an orator must be a good man. This was deemed essential to give moral dignity to himself, and to his efforts. It is equally true, that those who would live in the honorable remembrance of a future age, must be virtuous. The moral sense of mankind, has made this essential to a bright and enduring fame. In public, Cæsar and Tully are alike eloquent in praise of virtue and patriotism : we follow the former to his retirement, and find him profligate, and in fellowship with unprincipled and dangerous men ; we follow the latter to his Tusculan villa, and he is still the friend of virtue and freedom. And how much more profound our tribute of respect to the Roman citizen, than to the Roman emperor !

Those dissolute statesmen so conspicuous in the British senate, at the commencement of the present century, will ever suffer from the moral blemishes found upon their character. What if Charles James Fox was one of the most splendid of orators ? What if his royal friend, the Prince Regent, was the most “ polished prince ” in Europe, and sitting upon its loftiest throne ? Will not perpetual ignominy attach to their vices ?—to their moral and political prostitution ? History can never so palliate their

guilt and garnish their infamy, that their shame shall not be revealed.

Robespierre was eloquent ; his last speech to the Convention was a specimen of eloquence scarcely surpassed. But who now remembers, or praises his eloquence ? He was intellectual and profound, and by mere power of thought could sway an assembly. But who applauds his talents ? His heart had some generous sympathies ; he mourned the effusion of blood ; the last works of his life were projecting benevolent institutions, and a melioration of the criminal code ; he even pronounced in public, a beautiful and just vindication of his Maker, hoping that reverence for God would restrain the brutal passions of men. But who has been told of his humanity ? From an obscure chamber over a tradesman's shop, he sent out an influence that made Christendom tremble. But who has admired his power ? In condemnation of his character the world has forgotten his talents. We cannot praise the orator, or the statesman, while we abhor the man. How differently will the world treat a contemporary Christian statesman, across the channel ! Who in civilized countries will not hear of the eloquence and virtues of Wilberforce ? The annals of humane and righteous legislation will give him immortality.

The spirit that honors benevolence, will keep his name fresh in the hearts of mankind.

In our own country, soon after the adoption of our Constitution, we find, among our great men, one conspicuous for public services, as well as for sagacity and talent. As the leader of his party in the American Senate, in a debate upon one of the gravest questions that ever came before it, he was put forward by his friends as their chosen antagonist of Rufus King. At three several times was he unanimously designated by them in convention as their choice to represent his country at a most important Foreign Court ; and Madison and Monroe, as their committee, urged his nomination in vain, upon the first President of the Union. By political fortune and force of talent, he rose still higher in public life. But what measure of public service—what eminence of talent and station—can ever remove the infamy that covers the name of Aaron Burr ?

On the contrary, those excellent men associated with him through the revolution and in our national councils—those honoring us abroad as Franklin and Jay—those at the head of our Supreme Judiciary, Ellsworth and Marshall ;—how would they sink in the regards of mankind, if the imputation of immoral conduct were fastened upon them ! Suppose history could be falsified, and some veil could now be lifted



which should reveal to us the Father of his country, as loose in morals, or profligate and licentious in his habits. How would the moral feelings of the entire nation be revolted ! Even the base of the land would regret the disclosure.

May men of public station be governed by higher motives than a regard to fame—by the fear of God and the good of men ! But do they regard mainly the posthumous awards of history ? Let them maintain high moral worth. Immoralities are not lost in the radiance of talent and office, like spots on the sun. Moral delinquencies will not be excused hereafter, because they were associated with noble deeds and sentiments, and with powers that command admiration. The Future will pluck the garland with indignation from the brow of him who has possessed eminent abilities, in unnatural alliance with moral turpitude, and will erase him from the marbles of honest fame. Consider that moral and Christian principles are destined to have far greater extension and ascendancy, and must ultimately sway the judgment of the world. Even now, if the virtuous and the upright fix a seal of infamy upon character, it will remain ; history will transmit it ; and posterity, through all its generations, will echo its justice.

Whatever unfavorable appearances darken our moral and political horizon, I have no sympathy with

alarmists—none with those who are ever and falsely telling us, that the former times were better than the present. Amid pressing and threatening evils, there are redeeming tendencies and indications of promise. They are seen in an increasing regard to the elevation and improvement of the great mass ;—in the very sensitiveness of the less favored orders to their own condition and rights ;—in the great moral revolutions by which, in a short period, immense numbers of the vicious are reclaimed ;—in the alarm and reaction which ensue when public evils become extreme ;—in the conservative temper of the majority, manifested in times of peril, rebuking profligacy in party, experiments in legislation, corruption in rulers, and nullification in states. There are grounds of encouragement in the fact that our honorable men by example, and our legislatures by enactments, encourage and dignify agriculture and every species of reputable labor, which, by the moral habits they induce, and the extended and fixed interest they create in the stability of our institutions, are one of their main pillars ;—also in the active philanthropy of the age, which is relieving every want which man can feel, or which man can mitigate ;—and, especially, in the more practical influences of Christianity, which, retreating from the fiery weapons of disputation, and clothing herself in the garb of

charity, has gone forth on her ministrations of love, laboring for the intellectual, moral and spiritual advancement of mankind. The page of prophecy reveals hope : both Revelation and Providence indicate a moral progress. I would not so dishonor the Deity as to believe that government, which He has instituted for the benefit of the many, is to be their everlasting scourge. And if liberty, like religion, lingers near the tombs of its martyrs, it will tarry long amid the sepulchres and battle-grounds of these Christian states.

Yet there *is* danger. He is blind that does not see it. The future must be crowded with disaster, except on one condition—except our intelligent freemen give their hearts to God and their country, and their hands to “forge and join the links of that golden chain,” which is to bind us to Heaven and to each other.

When England, in intimation of her jealousy, accused Russia of “washing her right hand in the Black Sea and her left in the Baltic,” Russia retorted that “England’s hands and feet are washed in all the seas of the universe.” To other nations belong the ambition of extending their dominion, by conquest and from selfish policy, till

“Their morning drum beats round the world !”

Ours be a loftier ambition—to fill the vast territory we already have, with moral purity and social happiness; to cover our vallies, on either side the Rocky Mountains, with the blessings of knowledge and freedom, of virtue and religion. When at no distant day one hundred millions are to live between the two great oceans that bound us, they are to find questions of highest import to them mainly decided by this generation. Be it ours to fulfil our duty to these coming millions, by giving force and extension to those principles of justice and truth which are the foundation of all social union.

That civil power has passed from the few, into the hands of the many, and that the people are the guardians of their own welfare, is a cause for joy; not merely as a matter of justice and natural right, but as creating the necessity of qualifying them to guard the trust of self-government. It requires that they be fitted to assume the responsibilities, and discharge the duties of freemen, which is to ensure their moral elevation. It brings us to this alternative—the improvement of the great mass, or sure destruction; the diffusion of knowledge and religion, or the overthrow of our liberties. We must do good to our countrymen, or the nation must perish. A glorious alternative! It presents the powerful motive of self-preservation, to ennoble ourselves by

conferring benefits on others ; and it were better to perish in such high endeavors, than to live in security without them.

It would ill become the sons of New England, to be recreant to religious principle. That the people should be intrusted with their own welfare, that the just powers of government are derived from the consent of the governed, were accounted monstrous dogmas, till the pious puritans “dipped the banner of the cross in the blood of their country.” They asserted these and kindred truths, in the face of power and precedent, amidst battles and revolutions, and determined to exemplify them at any cost. Behold the result ! What is New England ? Read her history and revere. Look upon her as she now is, and admire. Honor religion, as first and foremost of the causes of her glory and renown. Over our soil the waters of the Divine Word have flowed, and left their golden deposit.

And who will predict any other than a career of honor, to our own favored Commonwealth ? Who does not take satisfaction in her preëminence among our states, in her rank in our national councils, in the fame of her statesmen, in her ancient institutions and splendid charities, in the confidence reposed abroad in her public faith, in her past eminence in moral and Christian virtue, in all her history up to



this date, as it will be read by coming ages? May the day never come, when those who fill her places of civil trust, shall impair her character and dignity, which with our own citizens is to be the ground of their attachment to their State and its government, and which is to claim from other states, and from foreign nations, the tribute of respect. To whatever hands her government is committed, may there be moderation in its councils; equity in its legislation; an adherence to that line of its policy, which is attested as wise, by long experience and ample prosperity; a pursuance of that course of liberal measures, of regard for prescriptive and vested rights, of abhorrence of parsimony and proscription, which has generally marked its administration. *Such*, ever be our honored position among the members of this great confederacy! And should the period ever come, when the associated states shall be jostled from their place in the national union, and in falling crush the fabric, may ours stand unmoved on the sure foundation of Christian virtue, an eternal depositary of Law and of Liberty.

To your Excellency, who has so often honored the highest offices of the Commonwealth, I offer the salutations customary upon this occasion, presuming upon your concurrence in the sentiments that have been expressed. Your political and private life has

already indicated your approval. I may not speak of services performed for the State, both in its Executive Chair and in the councils of the nation, which, illustrious as they have been from their immediate influence upon the general prosperity of the people, are scarcely less illustrious from their conformity to the lofty principles of an incorruptible integrity. The moral dignity and salutary influence of such an example are to be reckoned among the high benefits conferred by a distinguished public life. There are higher honors than those lost or won by the mutations of party, or by the mere accidents which often determine the result of popular suffrage. Whatever destinies may betide you on the turbulent sea of politics, thousands of the noble and the virtuous will hold you in honorable remembrance, and with the unbought suffrages of their hearts, will elevate you to a higher distinction than office confers—the distinction of having truly loved and ably served your country.

To those who bear a portion of executive responsibility, his Honor, the Lieut. Governor and the Executive Council ; also to the Senate and the House of Representatives, I may offer my congratulations that you have been honored with the confidence of an intelligent people, and that you have the opportunity afforded you of honoring yourselves and your

offices, by discharging the duties of your respective trusts, as those who fear God, honor government, and would deserve well of those who have committed power to your hands.

A Christian people may well expect of their legislative power, that both the manner of its exercise, and the laws which are its result, shall be in accordance with Christian principles. And there is never greater danger of their violation than when parties approach to an equality of numerical strength. On whichever side the balance may turn, your constituents will desire no higher pledge of impartial and useful legislation, than your observance of Christian rules as your supreme law. Then you will deem violations of moral duty as evils for which no party triumphs can compensate, and engage in a more honorable rivalry than of political warfare—that of exhibiting virtues and conferring benefits. In your public labors, and in all your future course, may you be governed by that high Constitution, framed, not by man, but by the Ruler of the universe, and verify the saying of the most distinguished statesman of past ages, “The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom.”









